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## Reminiscences of the Civil War: Andersonville

By DAVID S. WHITENACK, Greenwood, Ind.

On the 28th day of December, 1863, I enlisted in Company F, Fifth Indiana Cavalry, and on the 31st day of December was mustered into the service of the United States at Indianapolis, Ind. This was the day preceding the "Cold New Year" which is so well known by all the older citizens of the State, as it was the coldest day on record for the State; neither has there been another so severe since that date. Some four or five of us from Greenwood, Ind., were caught by the storm in the city and were compelled to walk home. We waited in the station at Indianapolis until ten o'clock at night for a train to take us home. The agent informed us then that no train would go out that night, as all trains were snowbound and the engines frozen up. Some of us had families at home and return we must for fear they would perish with cold before morning. So we started to walk the twelve miles home. I took the lead of the little band, and on we trudged through drifting snow and in the most terrific wind. If the wind had not been against our backs we should have perished. When we reached home the mercury had dropped to 28 degrees below zero. I found on arrival that the fire was almost out and the house very cold. It was not long before I had a roaring fire by which I thawed myself out. I thought it, however, a rough introduction to a soldier's life.

In about one week I was ordered to join my regiment at the front. It was at that time stationed at Knoxville, Tennessee. I was sent by way of Louisville, Nashville, and Chattanooga. When we arrived at the latter place we found that the railroad running to Knoxville had been torn up as far as Loudon, Tenn. After remaining at Chattanooga for about one week we were ordered to proceed on foot to Loudon about eighty miles. By the time we reached there our rations were all consumed and to make it worse they had nothing for us there but one hardtack each. The next day we were taken by freight train to Knoxville. When we arrived there we found that the regiment had moved to Mt. Sterling, Kentucky.

We were taken across the river south of the city into the woods where we had to remain for two weeks without shelter, and our fare reduced to quarter rations.

When the railway had been put in repair we were started again for our regiment by the way of Loudon, Chattanooga, Nashville, Louisville and Winchester, Kentucky. From there we traveled on foot to Mt. Sterling where we found our regiment encamped in the woods where we remained until March, when we were removed to Paris, Kentucky. From there to Nicholasville, then to Camp Nelson where we were equipped with all necessary articles of warfare, including pack mules for our trip over the mountains.

We left Camp Nelson about the first day of May and arrived at Dalton, Georgia, about ten days later. It was here that I first heard the music of a rebel bullet, and it was here where we came up with Sherman's army. On the 15th of May we fought a hard battle at Resaca, Georgia, where we lost a number of men in killed, wounded and missing. Four of our company were made prisoners of war.

From Resaca to Atlanta it was march and fight, march and fight until the enemy were finally driven into Atlanta, where they made a stubborn resistance and were only driven out after a long siege. A few days before reaching Atlanta, Captain Loomis of Company F secured quarters at a farm house for himself and company clerk, in which capacity I had been serving from the time I had joined the regiment. His object was to have me make out his quartermaster and ordinance reports.

We had not been here but a few days until his regimental headquarters were moved about a mile north of where they had been. The colonel notified Captain Loomis of the change, but he disliked very much to give up his comfortable quarters and decided to stay where he was, although there was considerable danger of getting picked up by the enemy's scouts. The second night after the removal of the regiment proved to be a very hot one in more than one respect. Captain Loomis concluded that he would sleep out on the porch. So after taking off his hat, coat and shoes, he lay down with a revolver placed on each side of him. About midnight the dogs about the house set up a terrific barking, which awoke both the captain and myself. Captain Loomis sprang to his feet and saw six or eight soldiers coming toward the house. He ran for his life as he supposed, but only to lose it. They commanded him to halt as he

leaped from the porch, but he gave no heed. On looking out of the window I saw a soldier running after him and then saw a blaze leap from his carbine and again he fired, but by this time the captain had reached the thicket and disappeared. I concluded it was time for me to vacate the house, so leaping out of the window, I found concealment near by. I soon saw the men enter the house and heard them ask the lady of the house who the party was that ran from the porch. They told them it was Captain Loomis of the Fifth Indiana Cavalry. Then I heard one of them say, "My God, boys, I believe that I shot him," After their departure the lady of the house told me they belonged to the Sixth Indiana Cavalry, and that they had come expecting to find her husband there. I proceeded to the woods and hunted for two or three hours for the captain but getting no response returned. The next morning I sent our hostler to headquarters. He soon returned and reported Captain Loomis mortally wounded. He died at three o'clock that afternoon.

On the 22d day of July, General Sherman ordered General Stoneman to make a flank movement on the enemy's right while McCook was to do a similar service on the enemy's left. After Stoneman had selected 5,000 men who had extra good horses, we started on our perilous undertaking. The lot fell to Brother George and myself to accompany this expedition. Our objective points were Macon first and then on to Andersonville. We gained both of these places but the latter in a very different role from what we intended. We reached Macon without any very great difficulties except hard marching both day and night. We accomplished our mission of tearing up the railroads and in burning trains and bridges. Our sport did not last long, for as soon as the enemy could recover from their surprise they rained down upon us grape and canister.

As was frequently the case this fight took place on Sunday, and it is quite a contrast to attending church or Sunday school. Our battle lasted from early in the morning until four in the afternoon, when General Stoneman surrendered four thousand and forty of his command to the rebel general who had fifteen thousand cavalrymen confronting us. The remainder of Stoneman's command had succeeded in escaping through the enemy's lines while we were making the enemy believe we were all engaged in the fight. It was a good thing for those who escaped, but hard for those who were kept back. It was a hard thing to do, reverse our guns and turn

them over to the enemies of the Stars and Stripes. This was only the beginning of our hardships.

The next move was to take from us everything of value and comfort we possessed. After this we were taken on the road to Macon, a distance of four or five miles when we encamped for the night. We had nothing to eat, so the guards were ordered to take two prisoners each to a cornfield where we could secure some corn as an only diet for supper. Quite a number effected their escape while this order was being carried out. One would suddenly make a dash for liberty and the guard could not leave the other prisoner to pursue the fugitive.

The next day we were taken into Macon and put on board a freight train for Andersonville, which is a small town sixty miles southwest of Macon. Here we were taken in charge by the inhuman General Wirtz. After we were taken from the train we were ordered to form in line. We were confronted by a company of rebel soldiers who were commanded to load their guns. In the meantime Wirtz was heaping abuse upon us, and vowing that he would have us shot down as murderers, thieves and robbers. When the company had finished loading their guns, they were ordered to make ready, take aim, but instead of the order to fire, we heard the command "recover arms." I suppose it afforded him a great deal of pleasure in trying to make us believe that we were to be shot down.

After this ordeal we were taken within the gates of Andersonville prison. Oh, how our hearts sank within us! What a sight to behold! Thirty-two thousand prisoners ragged and starved, without shelter and seemingly without hope. The prison consisted of twenty-five acres of ground inclosed by a high wall made of pine logs flattened on two sides and placed in an upright position in a trench three feet deep, forming a wall twelve feet high. Through the prison a sluggish stream wound its way, on either side of which was mirey ground which took up at least four acres of the space within. This necessitated the crowding of over fifteen hundred prisoners to the acre. The first thing to be done was to make a survey of the grounds to find some place where we could lie down and rest our weary limbs. In passing through the prison we saw quite a number gasping for their last breath and others so weak they could not walk without assistance. Starvation was apparent in almost every face. Some were so desperate that it was found absolutely necessary to organize the best men in prison into a body

of police. Soon after this was done six of the most desperate characters were arrested, tried, and condemned to death. Accordingly, a scaffold was erected in the prison and the six criminals were hung. This seemed to put a check to many of the crimes which had been committed. Andrew Kramer, Joseph Harmon, Isaac Vories, brother George and myself formed a mess and agreed to stand by each other until death, if need be. We slept together, ate together, and watched over each other as best we could.

To talk about dying in prison was not tolerated; but the bright side was introduced, and sometimes received with a shake of the head. Two of our mess were paroled while at Andersonville, while Kramer, brother George, and myself remained. About the middle of September, 1864, there came an order to transfer 11,000 of us to Florence, South Carolina. Our hearts were filled with hope by reason of this order, for we well knew that they would not remove us from Andersonville only through fear of Sherman's army. When we got without the gates of the prison it seemed as though we had entered another world, for the atmosphere was so different from that within the stockade. We were taken to trains and loaded into freight cars as long as one of us could be crowded in. Our destination we knew not. We passed through Macon on towards Savannah, Georgia. Some distance out from Macon our train came to a halt. Some one had discovered that the timbers, in a bridge that we were to pass over, had been sawed almost in two by some wretch whose object it was to kill as many prisoners as possible. In loading us my brother and I were separated and put on different trains. This was very discouraging as we needed each other's presence and help. I was taken to Savannah and my brother to Augusta. We remained however, at these places only a short time, and were taken to Charleston, South Carolina. Here we met again by chance, and were taken with a number of others into the jail yard. Here we had an exciting experience with shells fired into the city from forts held by the Union army. We could get but little sleep as the shells would come screaming over our heads and lights somewhere in the city and explode with fearful noise.

We remained in Charleston three or four days and were then taken to Florence, South Carolina, where they were building a stockade very similar to the one at Andersonville. About 11,000 of us were placed in an old field where we were to remain until the stockade was completed. No provision had been made to feed so large a

number and in consequence we were without rations of any kind for three days. My brother and I talked the matter over and I proposed to him that we should make an effort to escape, saying that it could be no worse to be shot than to remain and starve.

He told me he would make an attempt if I would. We told a few of our company what he were going to do when night came on. So when the time arrived they went with us to the north line of the prison where we found to our great satisfaction two guards, who knew not how to walk their beats; instead of one or the other following, they would meet face to face. I told my brother I would go first. So I waited until they turned their beats when I slipped out and made for the tall timber. My brother waited until they came and turned again when he too made his escape.

By previous arrangement we had agreed to imitate the whistle of the bobwhite, in getting together at the edge of the woods. Owing to a great deal of noise in the rebel camp I did not hear his whistle and in a very short time I heard him call, "Oh, Dave!" I gave the whistle, but in a very short time I heard him call "Oh, Dave!" I gave the whistle and we were soon together then into the woods and through a big swamp, when we came to a corn field where we each husked an ear of corn, then seated ourselves upon a big stump and ravenously feasted ourselves. I thought the owner surely must have planted sugar with the corn, so sweet was the taste.

We had determined to travel in a northwest direction and if possible reach Knoxville, Tennessee. The town of Florence lay directly in our chosen line, so it was necessary to make a circuitous route around the town, and in doing so we had to cross the railroad running south to Charleston. This we had to approach very cautiously owing to pickets that were posted in every direction from the prison. This we did by crawling across the track. When we had gotten to the middle of the road we discovered two pickets south of us. We continued to crawl until we arrived at a fence enclosing a woods pasture. We climbed a high fence and then just as we got down we discovered two saddled horses tied to saplings. Our first impulse was to mount, but our second thought forbade it, as we would have been sure of capture if we had taken to the roads. We succeeded in our flank movement, and after a wearisome tramp through the long night, we sought a mound in the middle of a big swamp and lay

down to rest our weary limbs. This was the night of September 19, 1864.

When we awoke in the morning the sun was shining in our faces. We arose and proceeded to eat our breakfast, which consisted of some raw sweet potatoes, that we had appropriated in the night. How our minds wandered back to former days, when we had hot biscuits, butter, meat and coffee. We were becoming very weak from want of proper food, but the hope of reaching the Union lines stimulated us to press onward. The second night came and we started again on our journey of 300 miles. We were guided by the North Star, taking an angle of forty-five degrees to the west. We could not reach the coast, which was much nearer, on account of the immense swamps. Very soon after we started the stars became clouded and it began to rain. With nothing to guide us we tramped on as best we could, feeling our way through the swamps by the aid of sticks. We found it very difficult to proceed on account of cypress roots, which had elbowed themselves up in the swamps. Morning finally came and we again took refuge in another swamp. We tried to sleep, but our minds were so excited by our undertaking and with the thought of reaching home, that we talked more than we slept. More raw potatoes for breakfast; dinner nothing, supper more corn.

We were convinced by the third night that we should have to have something besides raw corn and potatoes to sustain life. We had neither matches nor fire, so we concluded to appeal to the colored people for something to eat. This we had to do with great caution, for fear of being reported, or of being discovered by the whites. This we would do by approaching a cabin, which we had selected as the probable habitation of the colored man, and after listening to the conversation within and satisfying ourselves that they were negroes, we would knock upon the door to attract attention. Imagine their surprise when they discovered that we were Union soldiers. They acted as though they suspected us of being angels; but we were too poor and ragged to pass for them. However, we were the recipients of some corn bread, which I imagined was better than any I had ever eaten.

We again resumed our journey, but we could make but slow progress, and were compelled to wait for the stars to come out; then we would often find ourselves going in the wrong direction. We then determined to take our chances on the highway, for we



reasoned that we were beyond all picket posts and scouting parties. After this we made better progress but were compelled to wait until it was quite dark before a start was made, and always letting towns take care of themselves.

The fourth night we had our first experience with the upland rice. In making the circuit of a town we crossed a field containing rice and came very near losing what little rags we possessed. The blades seemed to be supplied with saw teeth, for they pulled and tore our clothes until we were glad to leave the field. We halted about midnight to take a little needed rest under a friendly tree that stood in a field near the roadside. In a few minutes we were asleep, but soon awoke again and opening our eyes we beheld a man stooping over and looking into our faces. Who are you, he demanded, when he saw that we were awake. We told him that we were "Yanks" when he said that he was glad to hear it, but he was not more so than we to hear him say it; he proved to be a fellow runaway, and after wishing each other good luck he departed.

Friday night, September 23d, gave us more excitement. We were wearily plodding along what had been a road, but had terminated in a narrow path. All of a sudden we came to a house, and before we could retrace our steps we heard the familiar yelp of the blood-hound. We quickened our pace on the back track, with the hounds coming after us; we left the path and turned to the right through the woods. I had gone but a short distance until I fell into what I supposed was a shallow well, but which proved to be a deep ditch. My brother got down into the ditch and by the aid of some friendly roots we succeeded in pulling ourselves out of it on the opposite side. On came the hounds, but when they come to the ditch they seemed to lose their trail and consumed their time in going up and down the ditch, while we made good use of their delay. Our scare being over, we went to a negro's cabin where we obtained something to eat. The old colored woman gave us a case knife, which proved to be of great value; with it we cut us each a stout cane and being thus equipped we resolved that none should make us prisoners again.

More rain had fallen on us that night and we were wet to the skin. We needed a good fire and on consultation we decided to go to a house that stood in an isolated place, and secure something to eat, and to dry our clothes. It was now daylight but we were so chilled and hungry that we became somewhat reckless in our ventures. We approached the house from the rear yard. We had

scarcely cleared the back fence when we were confronted by three hounds that came rushing at us with wide open mouths. Then it was when our canes came into good play. George struck one of them over the head and I another over the back, and sent them howling around the house, while the courage of the third deserted him, so we had a clear field so far as dogs were concerned, but when we looked at the house again we beheld three men standing on the back porch; for an instant all our efforts seemed as naught, but when we heard them scold the dogs and in a friendly tone invite us into the house, our spirits revived.

On entering the house we found a good fire, and were soon enjoying this welcome heat. Something impelled me to survey the room, when I discovered three rifles resting in their dogwood forks. The man of the house noticed that I seemed a little uncomfortable and remarked that we need have no fear of being molested. The two younger men proved to be deserters from the rebel army and were taking refuge in this secluded home. They assured us that they had had enough of the war, although their home was in South Carolina, the hotbed of secession.

After enjoying the fire for an hour and receiving refreshments we departed, thanking them for their kindness. We soon found a swamp and concealed ourselves until night. Saturday night, September 24, found us on the road again. We found a few sour apples that night and had no scruples in appropriating a few of them to our own use. Once in the night we stopped near the roadside to rest while we ate an apple. Very soon we discovered a man standing in the road and looking directly at us. Soon he came forward and demanded to know who we were. On being informed he expressed pleasure. He told us that he and two others had been following us for some time. The other two soon came up, which made a company of five runaways. We were very hungry for some meat and decided to have it if possible. We saw some geese in a barn yard but on approaching them they fled under the barn. On looking around we discovered a calf in a woods pasture, with its mother and some other cattle. We drove all of them as far from the house as possible into a corner of the woodland, where we succeeded in catching the calf. We carried it into a thicket about a quarter of a mile from its capture, where we brought our knife into use again, and soon had the choice quarters ready to carry away with us. We deemed it best to separate; so many of us together

might result in our arrest. I have often wondered how the owner accounted for the absence of his calf. We had the satisfaction of knowing that one South Carolinian, at least, had contributed the price of a calf to the Union cause.

We searched in vain for a swamp, in which to conceal ourselves over Sunday. However, we found a thicket near the road where we could hide ourselves. Late Sunday afternoon we heard the voices of two men near the thicket. My curiosity and the want of bread overcame me, and I determined to crawl to the edge of the thicket and ascertain who they were. I soon arrived where I could both see and hear them. They proved to be two young negroes who were talking of their experiences in courtship. I raised up out of the thicket, and was fearful for a time that their eyes would leave their sockets. We soon allayed their fears and made known our wants. They advised us to retreat into the thicket and remain until night when they would come again and take us to their home.

They came with the darkness and conducted us to an old building where the father of the young men met us. He told us he would take us to the house where he lived as soon as the "chillen" were asleep; saying that the "chillen's" tongues were too long, but when once asleep no danger then of waking up. He sent his son to the house and soon the mother appeared bringing with her some boiled green beans and fat pork. I thought I had never tasted anything so good in all my life, although at home I could not be induced to eat green beans with fat meat. It was not long until the son returned and reported all asleep. We then went to the house where we remained while the dusky mother prepared a lunch for us, that we might have something to eat in the morning. We made slow progress on our journey of three hundred miles, owing to brother George being afflicted with scurvy, contracted in prison and which broke out over his ankles and feet. Again when morning dawned we sought the friendly solitude of the swamp. Nothing disturbed us during the day save an occasional report of a rifle fired by some hunter in quest of squirrels. We kept very still and concealed ourselves as best we could. We were fearful, however, that the hunter's dog would scent us and reveal our hiding place, but the next report of the rifle told us that the hunter was farther away.

Monday night, September 26th. This date is well remembered on account of suddenly coming to a small town hidden by a bend in the road. We left the road and were soon beyond the town and

were congratulating ourselves over the narrow escape when suddenly we came face to face with a man going to the town. He said nothing and of course we remained silent. It was too dark however, for him to recognize us as "Yankee Soldiers."

My brother could travel but a few miles this night, and I was fast losing strength myself, owing to the rations of raw potatoes consumed on our way. About three o'clock that morning we found some fire in a log near the road side. I secured a large coal and putting it between two chips kept it alive until daylight, searching the meanwhile for a potato field, but could find none. At daylight we made a fire but had nothing to cook but three little apples. We felt discouraged and were unable to travel another night without rest.

When night came again we sought the cabin of the colored man. We approached a house supposed to be occupied by a negro family, and listened to their conversation and concluded that they were negroes. We called out the usual "halloo," when to our surprise an old white man came to the door, when upon opening it the light within shone upon us. He quickly recognized us as "Yankees." We told him we wanted something to eat; but he said he was too poor to give us anything, and besides there was nothing cooked, and that they had a very sick child and could do nothing for us. We were about to leave when he let loose a torrent of epithets against the "Yankees." We said nothing in return, not wishing to anger him against us. We had traveled about one-fourth of a mile, when we heard the hoofs of a fast approaching horse behind us. We stepped to one side of the road and watched for the horse and rider to pass. There were so many bushes on the opposite side of the road, making such a dark background that we could not tell whether the rider was white or black. We concluded it was some negro riding fast for the fun of it.

We soon found another house occupied by an old white man and his wife. We told them we wanted to stay with them for several days and recruit ourselves. They readily consented, and the lady of the house proceeded to get us some supper. When it was ready they both went with us to the kitchen, which stood apart from the dwelling, in Southern style. We were seated at the table which stood in one corner of the room, I sitting where I had a good view of the door, which I kept watching on account of the fast ridden horse. Presently when I looked up again I saw a double barrel shot

gun poked into the door, and leveled at our heads, and then came the order "Surrender."

I told the holder of the gun that we had nothing to surrender but our knives and forks and that we had use for them. He told us to finish our suppers and that we might consider ourselves prisoners. It was but a moment or two until about twenty-five men filled the room. They proved to be a company of home-guards, composed of old men, as all the young and middle-aged men were in the army. The captain soon sent them all home but two to act as guards. Supper over, we were taken back to the living room, where the good lady made us a bed on the floor. We could not go to sleep, however, as they kept plying us with questions about the Union army and the people of the North.

One of the guards proved to be good with a violin. He called for a "fiddle" and soon there was some lively music. This brought out the old man of the house who danced to the music. Three tunes were played and the fiddler refused to play any more without a treat. The old man said he had nothing but hard cider which he brought out and filled the glasses. The next thing we heard was, "Here, Yanks, get up and drink with us." We knew that it would not do to refuse so we drank with them, but not to the success of the Confederacy. The cider proved to be good for the scurvey, with which we were afflicted. Every time the fiddler would play three tunes he would call for the cider again, and as often we would be invited to drink with them.

They kept this up until one o'clock, then all retired save the two guards. I awoke about three o'clock and felt very thirsty. I got up and found both guards sound asleep. Here was a chance to escape but I knew that George could not travel far, so there was no use to undertake it. I had to shake the guard, by the door, to get him awake. When out in the yard he begged me not to tell the captain that he was asleep which was wholly unnecessary as I had no thought of doing so. In the morning the captain took us home with him, taking one of the guards, who was a near neighbor to him. We took breakfast with the captain and his family. After breakfast the captain and his guard saddled their horses and we started for Lancaster Courthouse, where we arrived about noon.

We were first taken into the courtyard, and while waiting there we were approached by an elderly man who inquired where we lived. We told him we were from Indiana. He then turned to the

captain and requested him not to move us until he returned. I watched him as he went away until he entered a large mansion about a square distant. Presently he returned with a platter filled with good things to eat. He then informed us that he too was from Indiana, having once lived in Bloomington. We were taken then within the jail. Upon pledging our word to the captain that we would not try to escape we were granted the privilege of the jail yard. The captain informed the citizens of the town that he had two "Yankee" prisoners at the jail and that they would have to feed us. Their curiosity to see the "Yankee" soldier led them to the jail in large numbers. Many of them brought us something to eat. One lady by the name of Mathes gave us a blanket and a small testament, which I have to the present day.

After being kept at the jail for three or four days, the captain returned and told us that he was ordered to take us to Columbia. He also told us that the old man, with the sick child, had ridden in great haste to his house and informed him of our presence in the neighborhood. He said that he was bound to act as the State was under martial law, and that if he had his way he would let us go. We were told that we would have to walk to Rock Hill Station on the Columbia railroad, a distance of forty miles. George told him that he could not stand the walk. The captain promised to do the best he could for us.

So we started, the captain and one guard riding behind us. We had gone about two miles when brother George told the captain he could walk no further. The captain then dismounted and told him to get on his horse. I was waiting for an order to mount the other horse but it did not come. After going a mile or two the captain began to get weary. He then went to a farm house and told the old farmer to hitch to his spring wagon and haul us to the railroad. He demurred, saying he was too busy, grinding cane, to haul "Yankees" to the train. The captain made him do it, however, so we got to ride the remainder of the way. We arrived at Rock Hill about dark and were given a splendid chance to escape if George could have walked. I could have gone but I would not desert a brother after we had passed through so many hardships together. We were put on board the train for Columbia.

When we arrived at Camden a number of ladies came on board with well-filled baskets to feed some recruits on their way to the Rebel army. When one of them noticed that we were Union sol-

diers, she most emphatically declared that no "Yankees" should eat anything in her basket. The captain who sat behind us told her to hand him her basket; she did so when the captain handed it over to us. I think she was the maddest woman I ever saw, but the captain told her to take it easy, as we were under his care and that he would see we had something to eat. We had had nothing since morning and we did not have to be urged to help ourselves. We arrived at Columbia about midnight and were taken to the jail, where there were about thirty other runaways. We found three other soldiers at the door of the jail who had come on the same train that we had. A sergeant was in waiting to take our names and regiments. One of the soldiers was a Frenchman by the name of Devilbit (Devilba). When he gave his name the sergeant told him to spell it; he did so, when the sergeant swore that it spelled "Devil bit."

We were kept in the jail at Columbia about six weeks, where we had but little to eat, yet we had shelter. At the end of this time we were taken back to Florence, the place of our escape. The boys of our company were greatly surprised to see us back, as they had pictured us at home, eating hot biscuits and drinking coffee. We happened to get back just as the rations had been discontinued, to force the prisoners to reveal the place of a tunnel that was being dug under the walls. After three days some one let it be known; just about the time of completion. The pint of raw meal was issued again, but nothing to make up the loss of three days.

Soon after our return to Florence, we learned of the capture of Atlanta. It was the custom of the prison guards to cry the time of day every half hour. One morning one of the guards cried out "*half past eight, and all is well; Atlanta is taken and gone to hell.*" Of course we were greatly rejoiced, but did not dare to express it aloud. The death rate continued to be fearful and our fight with "gray backs" was incessant. Our conversation was about something good to eat and about the prospects of our release.

December came and then January, yet we were held within the stockade; but on the 14th of February we were ordered into line and were marched to the railway station. Our hearts beat with hope, yet we knew not our destination. From Florence we were taken to Wilmington, North Carolina, where we made but a short stop; then to Goldsborough, where we were kept for two or three days. Next move brought us to Raleigh, the capital of the State. We then thought our destination was Salisbury, another dreaded

prison, but instead we were taken to Greensborough, where we remained for three or four days. We were then started North again which revived our hopes. When we arrived at Danville, Virginia, we were again unloaded and camped over night, where a number of the prisoners died, as it was quite cold and we had no shelter to protect us. The next morning found us on our way to Richmond.

We had often heard of "On to Richmond;" but we got there first. Some of us were taken to an old tobacco house. I had not been there long, however, until I found it difficult to breathe, on account of smoke from pine fires the prisoners had built on sheets of iron that were found in the building. I had gone to the head of a stairway to get a little fresh air, when soon a rebel officer ascended and demanded "attention." He called for six clerks, and he had them in about six seconds. I being one of the number, we were taken directly to Libby Prison. We were then furnished with blank paroles and were told that the sooner we filled them out the sooner we would get home. You can imagine how we worked; all that day and all night, without anything to eat. When morning came we were marched back to the place we had left. About ten o'clock an officer appeared and commanded us to form in line. Soon we were on our way to a boat in the James river. The boat moved down the river and we felt better for we knew that our lines were only two miles away. Soon I discovered a Union officer coming down the river bank, with a flag of truce, the boat began to "round to" and then joy forever, we were once more with our friends. Many of the men were too weak to climb the high bank; they did not have to wait long, for comrades came running to assist them. Once up the bank the sight of "Old Glory" met our eyes. Then came the shouting and the crying for joy. The whole camp gave us a royal welcome; but what a contrast: we were ragged and dirty and scarcely able to walk, while they were well clothed and full of vigor. They wanted to give us something to eat, but the officer in charge would not allow it; he said there was plenty for us at the boat.

Here we were again given a certain allowance, which was a wise thing to do, for if we had been permitted to eat all we wanted the result would have been fatal. We were soon moving down the river bound for Fortress Monroe. When we arrived there we found the bay so rough that we could proceed no farther. The next next day we started out for Annapolis where we arrived about dark. We were then taken to a Sanitary Hospital. Here we had to



throw away all our clothing and undergo a thorough scrubbing to which we did not object. New clothing was given us and we felt like new creatures. The clothing we had thrown away had been worn for fourteen months, and was a mess of rags, dirt, and "gray backs." Then we were escorted to our rooms, where everything seemed to be in perfect order. The beds were so white and clean that it seemed a pity to disturb them. Then the presence of lady nurses to care for us was enough of itself to make a sick man well.

I remained at the hospital for one week and was then ordered to proceed on my way home. The doctor told me that brother George would have to remain. But I was determined to take him home if possible; so when it was near the time for the boat to leave, I bundled him up, in the absence of the doctor and nurse, and with great difficulty got him down to the landing and on the boat without being discovered by the officers at the hospital. The boat proceeded on her trip to Baltimore. Here we took the train for Pittsburgh, where we changed cars for Indianapolis. We arrived at Indianapolis about three p. m. the next day. The trip was a trying one for me, as I had to play the part of nurse all the way, as brother George was too weak even to sit alone. By the help of a kind friend I succeeded in getting him to our father's house, near Greenwood, Indiana. Here I learned that my wife and baby were at Kokomo. It is hardly necessary to state that the next morning found me aboard the train for the Indian city; for I had neither heard from them, nor they from me for more than seven months.

Of all the good things I had to eat there was nothing that tasted so well as pickles unless it was more pickles. I remained at home for thirty days and then had to report at Columbus, Ohio. Here I was informed that I had been exchanged, and would have to report to my regiment, which was then at Pulaski, Tennessee. I arrived at Louisville on the 14th of April, 1865, and it was here that I heard of the assassination of President Lincoln. I arrived at Pulaski April 20, and remained there until June, when the regiment was mustered out, all except those who had come in as recruits, who were transferred to the Sixth Indiana Cavalry. I was appointed first sergeant in Company C and served as such until July 1st when I received a commission as second lieutenant. We had very little to do at this time, as the war was over, and the army of the South had laid down their guns, and had gone again to the civil pursuits of life. I was mustered out at Murfreesboro, Tennessee, September 15, 1865.